

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Foster Farms

#### Washington Manufacturing Services

#### With Management Training, Foster Farms' Employees Are No Longer Flying The Coop

##### Client Profile:

Foster Farms is the largest poultry company in the western United States, with sales in excess of \$1 billion annually. A fully integrated enterprise, the company owns and operates chicken hatcheries, grow-out ranches, feed mills, processing plants, and delivery systems. The chicken processing plant located in Kelso, Washington, employs more than 400 people.

##### Situation:

Foster Farms-Kelso wanted to provide a standardized approach to training new and existing production employees to become supervisors and leads. The training curricula and method needed to be simple and visual so as to eliminate the need for cost prohibitive multilingual curricula. Foster Farms hoped standardized training would speed training time and increase productivity. In the long-term, the company also hoped improved training would reduce employee turnover. The company contacted Washington Manufacturing Services (WMS), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

##### Solution:

WMS contacted its training partner, Lower Columbia College (LCC), to participate in initial meetings with Foster Farms to define the scope of training required. Once WMS, LCC, and Foster Farms had defined the expected results of standardized training curricula, WMS contracted with Michele Alston to provide the training method, curricula, and instruction. Training was developed and delivered to 25 leads for 25 production processes.

##### Results:

Reduced employee turnover by 62 percent.  
Reduced annual new-hire cost by \$500,000.

##### Testimonial:

"Washington Manufacturing Services (WMS), on behalf of Lower Columbia College (LCC) and Cowlitz Economic Development Council (CEDC), brought in Michele Alston to provide the curriculum and "train-the-trainer" management training for the 25 leads on 25 production processes. The training has played a significant role in reducing employee turnover at Foster Farms' Kelso facility."

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Al Walsh, Human Resources Manager